

# **MINUTES**

## **TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**4 November 2013**

### **I. ROLL CALL**

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 3:00 PM on Monday, 4 November 2013. Those members in attendance were Mr. Ward Bucher, Chairperson; Mr. Ron Mitchell, Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Ms. Alice Marie Gravely, Mr. Robert Amdur and Mr. Jacob Laureska. Dr. Dorothy C. Fenwick was absent. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Florence Ball.

### **II. CURRENT BUSINESS**

A. REVIEW MINUTES OF 7 October 2013 MEETING – The minutes of the last meeting were read. Mr. Ron Mitchell moved to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Marsha Kacher and unanimously carried.

B. TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – Mr. Martin Sokolich distributed copies of Chapter 12 “Historic and Cultural Preservation” of the Comprehensive Plan as updated thus far. Included is a table titled “Overview” which lists the County’s policies and the suggested actions to fulfill each policy. Some of the policies were still unaddressed in terms of action, and the Commissioners discussed possibilities. Mr. Ron Mitchell expressed the need for the County to provide TCHPC more “teeth” to support and enforce the authority of the Commission. He feels TCHPC is currently powerless to enforce its purview and decisions in its attempt to protect the County’s historic properties and their structures. Mr. Ward Bucher pondered what would happen if the owner of an historic overlay property did something to the protected structures not approved by TCHPC. Ms. Florence Ball responded that it would be a zoning violation, especially if the work was done without a county building permit. Upon discovery, the issue would be referred to the Office of Enforcement for appropriate remedial action which could result in fines, removal of the unlawful work and restoration to the structure’s former state as recommended by TCHPC. In the event the project had been reviewed by TCHPC as an official Work Application, and a County building permit had been issued, the building inspector would coordinate with a designated Commissioner to report any deviation from the TCHPC approved details. In that case, a stop work order would be issued until the problem could be resolved to the satisfaction of TCHPC. Mr. Martin Sokolich explained the TCHPC is part of the zoning code, and he confirmed that the procedures described by Ms. Ball were established several years ago when Christine Dayton chaired the Commission.

Mr. Ward Bucher, in reference to the unaddressed policies in the Comprehensive Plan’s Overview, said he felt the first step TCHPC might take is to prepare a county-wide inventory of historic properties eligible for historic preservation. Mr. Ron Mitchell said the State may have funding available for that type of project. Mr. Martin Sokolich said the inventory project compares to the Town of Easton’s recent inventory project which obtained funding with the help of TCHPC. He cautioned that even with an inventory in

place, TCHPC would need additional legislation to be able to enforce protection of the historic properties within the inventory. He said there is also the legality issue of getting permission from property owners for commissioners to visit properties to assess their historic value and eligibility to be part of the inventory. The various steps involved with producing an inventory were briefly discussed by the Commissioners.

Mr. Ron Mitchell said he feels it should be emphasized that TCHPC needs the power to enforce its actions and decisions. Mr. Martin Sokolich said the reason he kept the wording in the Comprehensive Plan unspecific is so the County Council does not object to specifics which could cause them to eliminate the entire section. Mr. Ward Bucher encouraged Mr. Sokolich to continue to think about the concerns of the Commission, and offered to meet with him to add more language in support of the needs and concerns of TCHPC to this section of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Alice Marie Gravely offered to join them.

- C. UPDATE ON RELOCATION OF JOHN W. GREEN STORE (T-769) – Mr. Ward Bucher said it was explained to him that the store is on someone else’s property and ownership issues are causing delays in the efforts to permanently relocate the structure. Mr. Martin Sokolich explained that there seems to be some confusion among the involved parties regarding ownership of the structure itself, as well as the land where it is temporarily located.
- D. DOVER BRIDGE PLANS: DISPOSITION OF ARTIFACTS AND SECTION 106 FINDINGS – Mr. Martin Sokolich said to date, there is nothing new in regard to the proposed bridge project. Mr. Ward Bucher asked if anyone got an invitation from the State Highway Administration to an informative meeting regarding this project. Ms. Florence Ball said she received one in the mail, but did not have it with her. Mr. Bucher asked her to see if she still has it, and if so, to scan it and send it to the Commissioners.
- E. BOLTON (T-336) SITE VISIT REPORT – A site visit was performed on 14 October by Mr. Ward Bucher, Mr. Robert Amdur, Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Mr. Ron Mitchell and Mr. Jacob Laureska. The house was found to be in excellent condition with some deferred maintenance items noted on the exterior. The small foundation vents were blocked and the foundation wall was damp and moldy. The lack of ventilation could eventually cause rotting of the first floor joists. Several remedial actions were noted in the report. Also, plants near the house are touching the brick wall and trapping moisture in the brickwork. It was recommended to cut the plants back 12 or more inches from the walls to allow air circulation. Some minor cracking of the brickwork in the front walkway were also noted. It was recommended to cut out and repoint the open joints with a mortar that matches the strength and appearance of the existing mortar.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. OTWELL (T-164) - Mr. Ward Bucher said concern was raised during a recent site visit at Otwell when it was noticed that the front porch had been changed with a larger roof and fiberglass columns and all the windows had been replaced with new ones with insulated glass. He said he had asked Ms. Florence Ball whether any building permits had been

issued for this work, and she advised that there have been no recent building permit applications for Otwell. Mr. Martin Sokolich presented construction drawings and TCHPC minutes from 1997 which verified that the work had been reviewed and approved by TCHPC at that time.

- B. NEXT SITE VISIT – Mr. Robert Amdur said he has arranged for a site visit to the Weber House (T-818) in Tilghman scheduled for Monday 11 November. He will email the Commissioners to confirm the date and time and provide details. Mr. Amdur said he is also waiting to hear from the owners of The Oxford Custom House (T-549) to arrange a site visit.

#### **IV. OPEN FLOOR**

- A. TCHPC WEBSITE – Several Commissioners commented that the new website assembled by Mr. Jacob Laureska looks good. Mr. Laureska said the website is about ready to be made available to the public. He asked everyone to provide a list of organizations that can be linked to the TCHPC website.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be on Monday, 2 December 2013, at 3:00 pm in Conference Room One of the Talbot County Office Building at 215 Bay Street in Easton.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:00 pm.

6 November 2013